

ENDING GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION DISCRIMINATION
HOUSE BILL 6452

March 19, 2009

My name is Elaine Warren. In my lifetime I have been many things to many people. I've been a daughter, a sister, a wife, mother, student, friend, colleague, a nurse, counselor, an activist and an American citizen. I have known the privileges that go easily with those roles, and my rights have never been diminished because of what was expected of me as a female.

My son has also been many things to many people. He has been a son, a cousin, a brother, and a husband. He is a student, friend, colleague and also an American citizen. You would expect that his life's journey has been an easy one as well. But, in many ways, it has not.

You see, my son came into my world as my daughter. For over 2 decades I knew "her" that way, until in her early twenties when she explained to me that since very early childhood, she had known that she should be, and in fact WAS... a boy, and is NOW a MAN. So, for the last 12 years, I have embraced, respected, understood, accepted and celebrated my son as the wonderful man that he is. Transitioning emotionally, medically and legally helps the world see him as he has always seen himself. He does not wish to be "a poster child for the trans movement." He long ago told me, "I don't want to always be known everywhere I go as a man who 'USED TO BE' a woman. I just want to live my life as a man." He is lucky to be able to navigate through his life now being only known and perceived as the man he truly is. Why SHOULDN'T he have that privilege? Why shouldn't we ALL? He is the same good person he always was, but once people KNOW someone is transgender, they cannot easily UNTHINK it. That information, which is essentially no one's business, clouds people's perception of who they are, and what they must be about. It gets in the way of evaluating them for their merit, their work performance, their right to credit, or fair housing, because all of us fear what we don't understand. People avoid the unknown, and discriminate unfairly against others who are different.

I have not been able to use my full name here today, because my son may be harmed by the publicity. Why should he constantly be "outed" to future employers, friends, colleagues or creditors because of my activism?

Please include legal protections and fairness language against discrimination based on gender identity or expression. How could that broad but simple inclusion in the law not be appropriate for every one of us?

It's been helpful to remember my favorite expression...

"THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO BEING YOURSELF".

Thank you